

Be A Star in Life

**A Collection of Life Empowerment Articles by
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Part 1:

Live the Dreamer's Life

Chapter 1

Believe in Dreams, and Achieve your Dreams

Try to achieve your life's dreams - what you have always wanted to do all your life. This is doable, and indeed important for both yourself and the world. Here's why:

1) Your Dreams often Tell You What You were Made to be

As a species, we are each equipped with different strengths, so we can work together effectively. However, some sections of modern society have neglected this and instead demanded everyone to meet the same standards. This has created a hard life for many. If we want a world of good wellbeing, we need to recognise the facts and start recognising everyone's strengths and help them to use them to their best. Start with yourself - don't let the system tell you you are inferior. If you see other people affected by this, talk to them and make

them feel better. And next time, when you can change or improve the system, remember to go by this philosophy.

Here's one thing that I cannot say enough of: you should never force yourself to be something you are not. I have found that, even if you tailor yourself painfully to fit something you are not, you will lose in the end, and bitterly, because you are not given a chance to escape whatever bitterness you got into since everyone thinks you must like it to get into it.

2) Most things are Possible, if only you Try

Most people have a whole catalogue of wishes they would classify as pure day-dreams. When they were young they probably thought they were not day-dreams. But years of being told otherwise and 'learning the hard way' has hardwired this behaviour into them.

But when you think of it, most dreams are quite achievable. These days you don't need much money to research and experience (at least to some extent) many cultures in the world. You

can learn almost anything out there if you just get the right resources, which there are plenty out there. And just dedicating half an hour to each activity is enough to learn a lot long-term.

If you want to bring your dreams to the next level, if you want to be a recognised pro, then you will have to work at it - your craft, even if it is very good, takes time to get recognised, especially if it doesn't fit well with the set standards and perceptions out there. But then, don't give up here! Just achieving those dreams to a level that you find fulfilling (e.g. becoming some sort of expert) should be a drive to continue. Remember, many of the most recognised pro's have said that some of their best moments and best work are often some before they had become recognised - e.g. when an artist was a poor unknown or a band was playing in garages and pubs. Your current moment may be your defining moment - never give up too soon.

Chapter 2

Overcoming the Opposition to Dreaming

Overcoming Cynicism

The most important thing to do to be able to start dreaming again is to overcome cynicism. Cynics have always been around in history, and we all know that it isn't the happiest way to live. You never see great historical achievements made by cynics, nor have they come up with effective ways to wellbeing - it is the dreamers, even how unrealistic they sometimes are, that end up being successful in life. Yet why do we still get drawn to cynicism that much? It comes through failure.

Dreaming and keeping the dreams up require bravery. Dreams are tested by reality, harsh reality, and it is only those who can overcome these that can find the prize in the end. In this process, it can often seem that turning cynical and uncaring can be easier, in fact it is often

much easier. In life, I have cried a lot for my dreams, did a lot of things that others have deemed useless, got my self-esteem destroyed many times. Yet I have found that whenever I gave up a little, the situation is even worse. When I give up my hope for the future - what is there to fight for? And then I become a robot in everyday life. Similarly, if I give up wanting this world to be better, then do I silently agree to condemn those disadvantaged people to be condemned forever?

This is enough for me to keep dreaming, no matter how hard it is.

The 'Scarcity Crisis' and how to Protect Yourself from Being Engulfed by It

There are so many crises facing people who just want a good everyday life today. But where are the crises actually? If we have a closer look at it, much of it relates to the stress from a system can't let everyone get hold of a certain something popular, or even if you are on board now, you may get kicked off later. This is based on something called the scarcity of resources by economists. It means that everybody can't have every material demand they want because production is limited. Examples include how, in economic bad weather, you may get a pay cut and be no longer able to afford brand name items, and so you drop off the 'fashionable' scene.

While the scarcity of certain resources is not very amenable, a satisfying life is not actually scarce. The vast majority of people in society already have the means to a satisfying lives, if they really put the thought to it. They just need to re-examine their needs. Basic human needs are food and shelter etc., and to be happy we

need something more. But that does not necessarily come from a material life - in fact evidence has shown that a material life does not make one happy. The way to happiness is to, rather, define your dreams in terms of what you want to do / get out in life, and do it on your own terms, the only way in which nobody can ever stop you. If you define your life goals in terms of the material, not only does this not fulfill most dreams very well (most dreams are spiritual, but can get translated into material in some way, and busy city people who don't have enough time to think often do that), it also makes you much more vulnerable to the fact that even if society allows you on the 'rich bandwagon' now, it may not do so later.

Chapter 3

Myths Against the Dreamer's Life - Time to Bust Them

In this supposedly materially rich world, more and more people are in fact turning to the fast growing 'life is bad and we can do nothing about it' party. Why is that the case? Because something is missing from our lives, something essential, we are told. But what is this essential thing that we are missing?

The Key to Happiness

The key to happiness is not in gaining more and more material and money, as modern society has proven. Are we truly more happy than those who lived 50 or 100 years ago? Yes and no. If you are a career woman (like me) you would probably not be happy living in 1905. If you were gay and lived in 1955 - that's probably quite a good definition of hell. But those changes did not come from our material achievements. From our material achievements - yes they did provide some comfort, but not to a great extent. The only achievements that probably contributed to wellbeing a lot were a small percentage of the many things that happened - to name a few, advances in medicine, means of communication, and the mighty computer. A new brand of salad dressing may make our day once, but it cannot keep an individual happy for more than a few months, let alone make humankind happier for a long time.

What do the great achievements have in common, that a new brand of salad dressing

does not have? The great achievements let us do more in life, the new salad dressing cannot do that. I believe that, as human beings we all have different strengths (and weaknesses may I add), and we are all born to achieve special tasks, things that can help the world greatly. The more we can do these effectively, the happier we will be, and the happier the world will be. Experts call this 'self actualisation'. But I believe that it is just common sense stuff. They say there is an Einstein, a Mozart, a Mandela, or equivalent, in each of us - it just needs to be discovered and promoted. This sounds cliché, but it's true. If you are asked to work like a robot instead, you won't be contented. Just like you won't be contented to lying around and running around like a dog does or chasing after cheese like a rat does every day - you know that it is not your job, and that is not the meaningful work for you.

So what is stopping us from achieving more of that? No one single thing is responsible, I believe, but a lot of myths that people have set up and accustomed to over the years. These

myths we have collectively believed, and they are pervasive in our culture. If we break them, we will do ourselves some good, and yes, to the rest of the world some good too. If you help your friends break free from these myths, you will be doing some good for them too.

Now Let us start Busting the Myths that Stop you from Getting to Where you Should Be...

Big Myth Number One: Is Feeling Good Selfish?

Feeling good about yourself is the start of an enjoyable and productive life. I believe this is the most important thing that you can do to change your life around. And no, I don't count myself as selfish in thinking this. Without trying to feel good about yourself and the things you can do, you cannot realise your potential in life, and you will end up succumbing to the 'it's all because life is shitty' thoughts.

Feeling good starts from your mind. To believe you can do well in what you wish to, and to believe what you are doing is good, is the first step to feeling good. You don't need anybody to

tell you that you are a worthy person. You just need to be confident that you are making a positive contribution to the world. But that feeling does not come with empty words or empty thoughts. What you need to do is to find out more about yourself, find your purpose in life, work hard for it and cherish it. More on this later.

They say a good feeling and goodwill is not forever. Sure, it's not, like any other thing, but you can make it last longer in life so that in most periods of your life you will be in this mood, and as a result you will be happy and productive throughout most of your life. The feeling will last if you try to remain hopeful in any situation and try hard to find a better way in the face of unduly unpleasant feeling (this is not to be confused with escapism), rather than just to 'acknowledge that life is supposed to be bad' - because that's not true. Just tell yourself that, and you only have to try that attitude a few times before it all makes sense. By that point you will have had past experiences to back you up so the attitude becomes automatic. But to

make the first step, you need to change your attitude - deliberately.

Some people say that to live a life with the goal of feeling good is selfish. Well, I can't disagree more. If your definition of Feeling Good is all about getting drunk and hung over and dancing through till sunrise and sleeping through the day, then yes, that is selfish. But there is nothing more meaningful than trying to be optimistic about the world, and from that perspective trying to find the your work in your life that is meaningful and takes your unique experiences and abilities to benefit the people around you, or even the rest of the world.

Remaining fresh and happy is always more helpful than floating in a sea of decay. The option is all in your mind. So start your happy life today!

If only we all appreciated Feeling Good as a Common Goal...

...Then we would all be happier and more

productive. Yes, more productive, and thus doing more things that can improve our lives collectively. These days it's all about productivity, in every single industry. But my experience tells me that, long term productivity can only come from a good feeling about life. Stress and deadlines can bring about short term adrenaline fueled productivity, but on the long run they wear everyone out.

Your feelings are usually useful signals. Taking good care of your body by listening to its signals is the first step to a comfortable life.

Though on the other hand, we all know that certain unrestrained desires can cause havoc in a modern society, like the urge to fight, hard-restraining them is an uphill battle and not a good way at all.

The key to looking after yourself is to understand what your mind/body needs and how you can usefully employ it. We can use it for putting people to their best use, something sometimes called 'human resource

management' in the business world, and is very important for productivity. For example, those with a lot of 'physical energy' may participate in sport or physical work rather than sit couped up in the office and spend their weekends wanting to start a fight. If you happen to be a maths expert but poor in the languages, you would indeed do better to contribute to the scientific or engineering world than to spend your time in linguistics. These are perfectly apparent examples. But there are more subtle parallels in our everyday life that we often don't pay enough attention to. Like trying to stand up to pressure on you to do something that can only make you depressed on a long-term basis because it's 'good for you'. From my experience, 80% of the time it won't be good for you. Which brings me onto my next myth.

Big Myth Number Two: Follow Your Heart is Not Good for You

I don't know who made up this myth, but it is quite counter-intuitive. And maybe because of the idiosyncratic nature of the very statement

itself, nobody actually states this myth aloud. But like my first myth, this one is quite pervasive in culture too. It often comes in ideas like to think about what is practical, 'the reality', and so forth. But while it may not really be a good idea to quit your day job just because you want to go to India for a month, having an ideal and working to it is a very noble thing to do, even if some parts of the ideal may not be very practical. Most inventions in this world wouldn't have come into being if everyone was 'practical' based. But somehow, everyone from our parents to 'productivity experts' tell us to 'stop wasting time daydreaming'.

Actually, I believe they are actually getting the opposite of what they want. Following Your Dreams serves two functions - one is that it helps us get towards doing what we ought to in life, as the process is driven by following what our minds tell us what we are passionate, comfortable and good at doing and what we are not. Those in the process of trying to do what they ought to also feel better about life, thus have a better physical and mental wellbeing.

The other important function is that some things can only be dreamt of - like the great inventions of the world. If nobody ever followed their dreams, we would still be stuck in the forests, eating raw animals and dressed in leaves.

People say the phrase 'follow your heart' more and more these days but actually people, in many circumstances, may actually be following their hearts less and less. In the advent of advice being so plentiful and mistakes being so expensive, people consult more and think less. (Note that this book is not about advice really - it doesn't tell you what to do specifically, rather it tells of a lifestyle you can follow that will do you good and in the process do the world some good too.)

However, this is problematic. One can only think for oneself. Others' choices are often unsuitable and may even lead to unhappiness or potential not fully achieved. Therefore, when you are required to make a choice yourself, do it yourself!

Big Myth Number Three: You are Useless /
Helpless

Big Myth Number Four: You are Not the One
Destined to Change Things

I will consider these myths together as they are actually two forms of the same myth, aimed at everyday tasks and big dreams respectively.

Thinking that you are worthless or unessential?
Thinking that there are too many people who are better than you? You are not alone, indeed. With so much of the two aforementioned myths going around, that is not surprising. But it's time to abolish these thoughts. It's time to abolish these thoughts because they stop you from dreaming. And we need to follow our dreams to do us justice and do the world good, remember?

Here's an exercise that can help some of us do that. Think of what you do best. Think of your presence, and what it can do to people. For example, by your presence you may be able to

induce happiness, calmness, motivation etc. and the effect can be seen in every day life almost from the moment you start doing it. Think of the ideas you are good at thinking, at what they can do. (You really need to block out the 'they're useless' voices for this one - try to consider each of the ideas that you authored without considering practicability for this moment). Your ideas may also go a long way if you just dream. Think of what may happen if your ideas can go a long way. They are not so lame after all, are they? Think of what you do best. Everyone can do them, you may say. But really? Think of your presences and ideas PLUS your skills. You have got a mix that much fewer people have now. What can this mix do for the world? Think of your experiences, and what they can add to the mix? Your ideas are unique and so are your experiences, and therefore so are what they can contribute. Your presence conveys the ideas in a way that is uniquely yours. Your skills are what will help you achieve the tasks that lie ahead. They are all valuable and they are what make you valuable.

Big Myth Number Five: You Can't Be Happy for Very Long

There are times that come and you don't expect it. And there are also times that have gone and you miss so much. Many people I've met recently have been stuck in the latter situation. Symptom 1 is: They usually yell 'Wow, I'm bored'. Symptom 2 is a deteriorating efficiency at work. and Symptom 3 is deteriorating health, especially mentally.

As you can see, helplessness seems to be the common underlying theme here. The people here are all complaining that they can't help themselves. This feeling is fostered by a culture where you are expected to feel much less than well for significant periods of your life because, well, this is life. But this is just another one of those dirty myths. Wellbeing is our key to knowing that all is well with our mind and body, and thus a lack of wellbeing is a warning sign, not something to take for granted in life.

Ask yourself, what you would do in this situation? Sit there and do nothing? Let them get you? Let

the growing shadow of darkness gradually engulf you? Or walk actively towards the source of the light? I would choose the latter, because it means I don't have to be engulfed.

For starters, many people help themselves by getting close enough to what they want to do. For example, if there are not enough parties around I will throw my own. If there is nothing to do I will create something for me and my friends to have fun with. If there is nothing special happening that day then it is time for me to do something about it. Starting by small things like having your friends sign an entry in your diary would be good. In short, the possibilities are endless.

But that's just the start. What we should do is to achieve a balance in our lives so that we don't need to fear going without wellbeing. And the balance should be automatic and inherent - you shouldn't need to chase after the 'next party' to feel well. We can only find that balance in time, but you should start working towards it today. How can you start? I believe that in finding that

balance, finding what lets you have a sense of wellbeing and trying to do more of it is important. Your mind and body are good signals that tell of that - so listen to them, rather than dismiss them with a 'life is like that'.

Big Myth Number Six - You need to Change your Personality / Style

Ah, this is probably the most public and acceptable of all the myths out there today. There are whole books written on it, even a whole industry based on it. Apparently some personalities are bad and successful and effective people don't have them. As a result, if we want to be successful, we need to change our personalities to be like those who are successful.

But you can only say this if you ignore the vast range of personalities among the people who are successful in today's world. Bill Gates is widely known to not be the easiest to get along with, while Oprah Winfrey is much more supportive. There are obsessive people and

relaxed people, creative people and robotic people, romantic people and practical people, who have all found success.

The key is not to change your personality, but to build on it, and avoid its bad side. Those people who succeed in doing this do well in life. They become the passionate, the analytical, the innovative and so on. Those people who don't become every negative type - the violent, the cynical, the unrealistic and so on.

The first step is to understand our personality, not reject it, because it is our greatest friend and our greatest foe at the same time. It is our greatest friend because it is one of the biggest tools in our toolbox to help us do what we are destined to, as showcased by the great masters of influence, from Oprah to Mandela to Clinton, who each have different personalities but are equally captivating. It is our greatest foe because if we get on the wrong side of it, it can really ruin our life, as seen in many sad cases in life (unnamed of course, but numerous) who have tried to do something that is really not for

them and failed miserably (and hence why they are all unnamed).

Why are so many people in the world afraid of showing, let alone studying their personality? It is clear that they are afraid that they will not be accepted, because they do not have the 'perfect personality'. Worse, some of the atypical ones, those that are probably most destined for greatness due to their uniqueness, are afraid that to be different is to be a 'freak'. But this is an illusion! And, this should be clear when you have a look at the people that have succeeded in gaining popularity, setting trends, selling well or making a mark in the scheme of things. All of them are 'different'! Many of those who have made the greatest contributions are exactly those who were bullied at school because they were different, not those 'perfect' types you find in management books. Sadly, other 'different' people have instead gone and wasted their lives on withdrawing from life or even becoming a real pest to society (much to the delight of those who want to prove the 'perfect personality' theories), because they just can't

see this. But clearly, the choice is up to you.

The world needs every personality, just not any one of them in their bad or toxic forms. If everybody were about the same, and nobody bothered to create their own 'brand', the world would be standing still and there will be virtually no big progresses in all areas of life. So, my advice is, cherish your 'difference' and use it well!

Are You Not the One Destined to Change Things?

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considering practicability for this moment). Your ideas may also go a long way if you just dream. Think of what may happen if your ideas can go a long way. They are not so lame after all, are they? Think of what you do best. Everyone can do them, you may say. But really? Think of your presences and ideas PLUS your skills. You have got a mix that much fewer people have now. What can this mix do for the world? Think of your experiences, and what they can add to the mix? Your ideas are unique and so are your experiences, and therefore so are what they can contribute. Your presence conveys the ideas in a way that is uniquely yours. Your skills are what will help you achieve the tasks that lie ahead. They are all valuable and they are what make you valuable.

Chapter 4

Building that Dreamer's Life

They all say that it is the little changes in life that count. And it is true! Big changes are hard to make, and are often accumulations of small changes anyway. So starting with the small changes is the way to go, usually.

Make just a little change in life today, and you may be onto something already. It can make a great difference! It may be that you are tired of your routine trips. Try to catch the alternative bus if you can afford to be home 10 minutes later! You may think it's just a trip, so what etc. But that trip may inspire you and refresh you so you can do better work.

It may be that your surroundings bore you. If so, change them! Change your decorations around or add 1 or 2 items here and there to make your working/living space feel somewhat different may just give you that energy boost you need. It

may be that your neighborhood is too familiar.
Shop in another part of town, perhaps on the
way home!

These are just some things that you may not
need to be any richer than you are now to do.

People can Dream, Machines Cannot.

Therefore:

The Most Important Change - Stop Being a Machine.

People nowadays often comment on how the people around them are becoming more and more like machines. Is that actually true? Probably yes, probably no. But a large part of what they are referring to is the fact that the world is becoming more and more impersonal.

Some blame it on the technology proliferating in our world. Is there a problem with this? Actually no, since the machines themselves are becoming more and more 'human'. Also, machines are just tools, and used well they can actually assist in interpersonal relationships, as some who have used internet dating have found out.

But why are some of us living as machines then? By choice or coercion, probably more by choice than coercion actually.

Let's look at the main difference between humans and machines. Humans have these superior qualities:

- 1) Humans can think for themselves.
- 2) Humans can act outside a previously set of instructions.
- 3) Humans have much higher fault tolerance.

Machines are much more productive, however. Imagine how many more people a company will have to use to do the same tasks if they did not have computers? They are productive because they are designed to do the same things over and over again, without the need to think at all. You would imagine that if people did the thinking, and machines worked on the 'productivity', then everything should be good. Also, if humans became machines then nobody would be doing any thinking, and we would have productivity for nothing. Therefore, it follows that now that machines can do the 'boring stuff', humans should actually become more human to maximize the productivity.

However, the problem is that, within many

companies there exist mundane tasks that are require a bit of intelligence and hence can't be done properly by a computer, yet don't really require much human thinking. In short, they require a human working like a machine to complete. And in the current structure of our society, such work is numerous.

This problem will only go away with social restructuring, which I guess will happen in the next few decades. But for now, if you have to mainly do such humans-as-machines work during the day, it is up to you to maintain your complete, thinking humanness in other parts of your life. If you really put effort into doing so, you will do yourself some good, as you will be able to understand yourself better (a human attribute), and therefore choose things for yourself wiser. You will also be doing the world some good by helping to make it more human.

In conclusion, the answer to 'are you living as a machine' is that of a choice (with you), like all other lifestyle questions. Also, remember not to coerce others into becoming machines by giving

them overloaded, mechanical tasks. And most of all, remember to be tolerant of faults.

You Only Know Your Dreams if you Express Them, so be High on Self Expression

Talking about thinking humans and the importance of understanding yourself, self expression is something that is good for you in both these goals. It is important for self understanding and establishing your identity, which is an important step to finding out who you actually are and hence what you need in life and what your work in life is. It is also a way of valuing yourself as a special and valuable individual - if you can do this well, you are less vulnerable to the cynical forces of the world that try to tear people apart all the time.

Self expression does not require a lot of effort.

It can be your (regular/irregular) personal movies/books/music chart

It can be a point form record of your day's highlights

It can be your to-do list for the day (how amazing it will seem like to read in a years' time!)

It can be a piece of random writing you felt like

doing on the train

It can be what you wrote on a note a friend gave
you, after reading it

It can be.....

It can be.....endless, and

It can be a collection of all of these.

And the good news is, it is easy to start today!

Start Paying Attention to Your Own Concerns

There really is an unhealthy culture of self sacrifice out there. I think it probably originated from the idea that if everyone puts in their share of work and dedication, then the work will be done more productively. Which is true indeed, but this idea has really gone too far nowadays. When people raise concerns, they can be seen to be distracting everybody from 'real work', or worse, putting up a challenge to the status quo where 'everyone is happy'. It is this culture that has led to many people learning to suppress their concerns down to just existing in the 'subconscious', leaving the conscious mind for 'more important things'.

What's wrong with this is that most human concern actually point to sources of discomfort, and if these are not dealt with well then they can lead to chronic misery or conflict, meaning that people will toil on without a purpose, living in misery and not being very productive either. It is in this culture that people cease to question if their lifestyles are good for their health,

mental or physical. So many big 'public health problems' could be prevented if people just slowed down and... thought about their concerns.

Therefore, we need to unlearn this culture. Don't let people drown out your concerns, for they do matter. Through your concerns you may see something that past people haven't. Have a questioning mind to the beliefs out there, and how things are done, even if they are 'traditionally accepted' (I am not a big fan of this idea at all, as you can see). All that out there may not really be right, and concepts are often contaminated by centuries of brainwashing, right?

Because this culture of suppression is so prevalent, you may actually find people trying to train it back into you. Keep it out at all costs, now that you know it is not doing you any good. Keep your humility and clear head though, and remember to be calm in the face of 'the world collapsing upon you'. That way, you will sail through the storms that an 'aware person'

unfortunately needs to deal with in this
suppressive culture.

Reviews help bring out hidden wishes, so Let's Start a Life Review Too!

It is helpful to realize what you really want in life, and from there not only will you start making better decisions for yourself, you may also gain more than a little bit of insight into what your work in life really is.

Start a life review today to map out all your dreams and wishes, dissatisfactions, and other ideas, and start finding easy and practicable ways to deal with them.

If you feel that you are not living comfortably, or are unable to do the things you feel you should try and map out your discomforts. Then try to find out the reasons behind them (remember, knowledge is strength). Think of plans which are practicable to get yourself into a more comfortable life.

If you feel that you are going nowhere in life, then you can map out your strengths and weaknesses, and what you want to do and

where you want to go in life. Then think about how to put these into the life you are having now. Remember, sometimes there may not need to be that much disruption to reach a goal, if you try to fit it in the right way. While I do not believe that a four hour working week is really practical for most people, I really like how the book *The 4-Hour Workweek* by Timothy Ferriss tries to fulfill wishes and make people 'rich' by breaking the 'dream life' into little digestible pieces.

If you feel that you are not enjoying life, then you are probably not liking the things 'you have to do' in life. Start by thinking of a list of activities you would like to do. And try to fit them into your life. Also, add plenty of variation/events to your life routine if you are feeling too bored/tied down.

Just remember, when trying to change things around. Do not take too big a step at a point. Start with the more feasible changes that also give you the most significant results first. Also, remember that thinking that 'you can do it' is

the key to putting the review to work.

The world around you isn't always a Dreamy Place, so Try Very Hard to Maintain Your Space

Try very hard to maintain your space. This includes time to be yourself, express yourself, explore, and the confidence to be yourself and the fresh mind to explore. When you take care of your own space, and everyone else does the same, we will be a friendly and spacious community.

People who don't take effort to consciously maintain their space will find their space being gradually quashed by the events and 'duties' surrounding them. They will no longer be able to think for themselves or do meaningful things just for themselves, and thus they will become a machine and a concern suppressor without choice. And there are indeed many 'incentives' to give up your space in this numbers driven world, which explains why many people actually happily give up their space. But don't give into this 'temptation' - your space is worth more than any set of numbers they can bribe you with.

Chapter 5

Making Dreams Possible for Everyone

Re-Defining success

Success is so hard to achieve, especially in the modern times, when once you get there, everyone else seems to be there too, and so you remain average no matter how much effort you put into things. In this climate, a lot of us end up becoming perpetually greedy and unhappy people.

There is a better way. I believe that everyone comes to this Earth with a particular set of skills and 'magic' that is their own, and everyone should be able to use this magic well in their lives. The important task for everyone is to find their work in life, and work at it, and it will be for the better of both that person and everyone else. I believe a system to encourage individuals to start doing that is important, but as such a system is still being set up, individuals

themselves who get this message now will have to work hard to find their own way.

Working for a Chance for Everyone

Everyone deserves a chance to do what they want to do for the world, really. The world also deserves to receive the goodwill of everyone willing to give their best to contribute. That's just the way it should be.

Chapter 6

For Harder Times

You Can Get It

Have you often thought that something is so out of reach you will never get there? Well, often there are many ways to arrange things to suit your goals better, if you will just think about it. For example, if you feel very isolated from the rest of the world, reading some internet news or personal websites may work. A simple gathering can be the start of big things. Just don't give up, even when your (and others') pessimistic sides kick in.

Don't panic!

Nowadays everyone in the world seem to be panicking too much, and as a result irrational decisions are taken, the principles that drive our actions are often compromised, and the things that we have built and cherished for so long are gone before we know it. So, everyone who wants to change things around, please keep a cool mind, think clearly and only then act after that, act on rationality and not on fear.

What's Good is not just Somebody's Version of What's Good, Remember

If you want to do something to improve situations, don't let your constructive thought be destroyed by the endless coils of judgment out there. You too can decide base on your understanding of things. And they don't have a right to slam you down as long as you are not hurting others or taking others' rights away.

Keep the Dream Alive

Many young people, especially teenagers, believe they can change the world, and that one day they will be famous, and own a great lifestyle. However, equally many 30-somethings (I haven't reached that stage yet, but I have read) sigh at how 'average' their lives have become. What caused that transition? What killed the dream? And how can we bring back the dream in time, before we age too much to forget it?

Feeling Guilty

Feeling Guilty has a purpose in preventing you from making errors. However it does nothing much otherwise. It interferes with a good life in excess.

Learn the lesson so that you do not commit the error again. However, move on after that.

At least, thinking positively, if you can almost do one similar good thing for everything error you made, than you would have helped improve this world.

Affected by Tribalism?

Does this (or even he/she) belong to this faction? That fad? Those kinds of culture? Ultimately, we all belong together in this one world, so lets put these silly labels aside whenever they obstruct the path to this truth. Use the best of this world, and care for everyone. Try to appreciate everything you can, and don't be arrogant over that you don't understand. Today you may think something's wrong, tomorrow it may fit.

Get through the times together

Though we should never be dependent on it, most of us will do better when we have each other to support us through various times. Therefore, activities to bring us together in this aim is good. There are various places that do this already. Better still, however, is to put this out in everyday situations, and in situations where people are not 'tribalised/restricted' (i.e. probably generally groups of friends rather than special groups). Also, extend this to the wider community, also non-judgementally. That is why it is good to see 'popular role models' donate to various causes, from disadvantaged ghettos to discriminated minorities. This type of activity is definitely better than endless meaningless boozing and offending.

Part 2

Happy Life Philosophy

Chapter 7

Envisioning a Beautiful World

You just have to believe whatever vision you dream of, as long as it is good for people. Don't let the outside cynical world get you down.

Dreaming up Something Great...

To me, the opportunities for dreaming is the best thing about pop culture. This culture of dreaming has been behind some of the biggest legends in history, and has brought to the forefront some very important ideas, eg. the peace movement, equal opportunities for minorities. Without these things happening, where would we be now?

On a more personal level, dreaming means that you will never give up in getting what you want and this means you will never give up on yourself or the possibility of a beautiful life. This is important to keep brilliant minds going in times of hardship.

So I think it's important that we celebrate, and whenever possible, contribute to the culture of dreaming.

Find your own Wonderland

I believe that we should wake up every day trying to find our wonderland for that day.

First I think about what I want to do. Feeling like doing something meaningful? You can either search through the traditions and try to find something there, or try some of the new things that people are working on. More importantly, if the things they do out there aren't really right for you, then feel free to use your insight and creativity to make it better. Do believe in yourself, for you too can be a great contributor to this world!

Then I would try to get into the right mood. Working in a good environment is an important thing that can stimulate your mind, make tough work less so, and make your day brighter. Different types of environments (or even images) you can go to to suit your mood of the day. Music is also an important tool for this exercise.

Finally I would try to find the right people.

People who will be friends no matter what, people who share your interests, and people who can be physically around you so that you don't feel like a robot in a lab, in that order. The first one is probably a hard find, but is always worth trying, the second is easy with modern technology, the third isn't so hard either.

I Already Have a Lot

'The Reality' is almost always one of the things that stop us from getting what we want, isn't it? Why is that ? Does it have to be this way? We often say that we don't have this or don't have that, and this largely make up 'the reality' that we talk about so often. But does what we don't have really stop us from our goals? Often there is more than one way to achieve a goal, so while not having certain things can stop us from using one particular path, it cannot stop us from going for our goal altogether. What we need to do is to look at what we have got, how we can effectively paste together a path to get it with the resources that we have, not with the resources that we can't have.

It may not ever be a path that others have found, but that doesn't mean that it will not be successful. Otherwise we wouldn't have pioneers!

Beautiful Things...

Making the room that you sleep in the paradise that you dream of, with items or pictures reminding you of the things that you like can really make a big difference to life. It can make you start with a better mood, give you a better day, and put more inspirations into your head.

So try it today.

Chapter 8

Living Life to the Fullest

Wake Up to Real life!

How many people are resigned to reading about others' dreams in the paper or watching it on TV? There must be many out there, seeing the numbers excited by reality TV compared with those really trying every bit of their existence to achieve their dreams.

But we can change things. To start, start daydreaming - this thing that we were often discouraged from doing from when we were in school. Come out of feeling inferior, something that may have been instilled into you from a very young age but certainly not coming from inside you. Use flexible thinking to circumvent unhealthy hierarchies telling you that you are nothing - this is wrong because you have a brain just like the people who invented these myths. Then you will have made a good start.

Ending A Culture of Inferiority

The concept of knowing our place and not hoping for better may sound outdated enough to most of you, I think. However, it is still being hammered into us all the time. Like we are supposed to know that there are those who deserve to have much richer lives than us, or that the red carpeters are supposed to enjoy interesting lives we can never have. Well, I refuse to listen to any of this. At the end of the day I believe I can create the life I want. It is not my fault that the world is arranged in such an inequitable way, but at the same I don't have to obey this absurd order that seems to fly in the face of everyone being equal. We all have to remember this: dollars are just tokens, tools, and they are not the only tools we have to make things happen in this world. Creativity, your mind, is an even more important tool.

The Spirit of Real Life

The Spirit of Real Life is spontaneously loving, curious rather than fault finding, and free from harmful man-made rules. Discrimination and bigotry can only take us further away from looking objectively, further away from finding about the truths of this world, and further from the true spirit of real life. It takes us further from love, compassion and a better life for all, and nearer to thought of destruction, and worshiping of harmful man-made rules. Therefore it should be avoided at all costs.

Chapter 9

You Are the Voice

The Unique Voice

Most of the red-carpeters out there are so similar to each other, and (sadly) that set of things they all do becomes the hot thing of the day. It's sad because although we see so many faces, we don't get nearly as much inspiration or learn nearly as much about the world. Maybe that's because of commercialisation - everyone is instructed by their companies to do what brings in money. But in the end, it's always the unique voices that contribute, that are remembered. Think about the last few decades. How many 'original legends' can you remember, even if they were poor to begin with? And how many of those 'Copycats' do you know, even if they brought in the cash relatively quickly? So try to be a unique voice, even though everyone is chasing the hot thing.

Inspiration to Create Something New

So many of the great additions to our world from the past few decades all actually came from simple ideas. Some people borrowed traditions from other cultures, others just believed in their little ideas that just came out of their mind. Technology itself often creates new inspiration too. But most importantly, the dreams, the ideas that we can have a better life, was what changed everything. We can all do with a bit more of those, I think. Now do you have inspiration?

Upholding your Clan for the World to See

The first black university student. The first Aboriginal pop star. The first woman in parliament. What do they have in common? They showed us that their type is worthy of everybody's admiration too. They showed us that they can be successful without hiding or being ashamed of who they are. They showed us that what they are can even bring some advantages both to them and to the world in some situations. They were strong, have tried very hard to get there, and their success is more than just their own.

Now you too can be doing this in life. In your everyday life, besides trying your best to do whatever you are good at, don't forget the things that you are that society doesn't think is so glamorous as yet. For a start, stop being ashamed of who you are. Now, be braver and dig up the things that you are that society seem to misunderstand. Try to think of reasons to be proud about them, and put them in your heart. When it comes to your time to cross the

finishing line, you can just show everyone how proud you are. That way, your achievement won't just be your personal feat, and it will not be in vain.

The Creation of an Example

"If life gives you lemons, make lemonade," so goes the saying. But how many of us can actually do that? And why can't we do that all the time?

I think one of the main factors is that we care too much about how other people see things. For example, if you are a poor artist that can do nothing much about your life except using the cheapest materials for your work, you are quietly likely to be seen as a nobody by many people. This causes a lot of people to just give up. Worse, throughout history certain groups, like people of some ethnic backgrounds or with certain medical conditions, were discriminated against and were expected to remain within an inhumane boundary that forever limits their potential. Those who try to escape this boundary not only faced tremendous hardship, they were even told that they were delinquent and even evil. No wonder under these myths and perceptions there were so few that could do it. Coming back to our point, if we believe it when others tell that our lives are crap and

hopeless, we will act like this is the truth, and will not be able to move forward on anything. Rather, we should have a look at what we've actually got and what we can actually do about things. Maybe then, you will be able to do something brilliant.

Truly a Superwoman

She admired the Superwomen
For all that they could do.
And she got all her energy
From the inspiration they gave.
Miss Cata was someone like that, she thought,
Someone that had been an inspiration all along,

But Miss Cata let her down
Cata was not the ideal she was thinking of
All that time.
She bullied for her own gain,
And never helped others up.
What she did look glamorous,
But it was actually harm.

Now she has her own Superwoman life,
She swore to be never like Cata.
Doing good is even more important than looking
good,
And that's her mantra, every day.
She is a real Superwoman,
Unlike Miss Cata.

Chapter 10

Ways Out of Hard Places

New Paths are the Best Paths Sometimes

So you want to do something. You've found out the tried and loved path to it. But then you see too many already successful people on the path struggling to make it, and also find it hard to get an access. What do you do?

You find a new path, of course. All paths are found by people, and if the existing one is so hard to use, why not use a new one? New legends running on the express lane often use a new path, and that's the secret of their success, after all.

Picking Yourself Up Again

Feeling down and hopeless from time to time is something most of us cannot avoid. But letting this feeling stay in our system for too long will damage us, and prevent us from effectively going for our dreams. So we need to learn to pick ourselves up again.

The first thing I ask myself is, is it really that hopeless now? Isn't there just the little glimpse of hope somewhere in my vicinity that I can just pick up, and run miles ahead? Often there is. Even if there is not something that you can see, you can start using your imagination, to join up some of the dots in your life, and see if some interesting combination comes up. Often that is enough to give you some new inspiration to keep you going.

Just remember that, in life the run to victory often starts from a trough, and when you have gained enough momentum to come out of the trough you often will already have enough momentum to cross the finishing line.

The Fine Line between Rejects and Stars

Stars and rejects share one thing: they are both different. It is not surprising that stars were often rejects before they became liked.

Therefore, every reject has to remember that, like stars, they may have a great deal to bring to the world, and what they have to do is to start believing in themselves. They also should try to connect with the outside world while remaining unique because that's the only way they may be able to bring their something new out there.

These two strategies are often what commercial people do to bring previously unspectacular things to the forefront, and maybe it is time for all of us to start harnessing them.

Start Moving Away from Hurt

How much hurt are we creating for ourselves? You only have to watch the news to know. Wars, terror, people making others lose, people putting down other people are all man made. Why isn't finding a cure to all of this at the top of the international agenda yet? Is it too hard? No, in fact it can begin in any individual, it's as easy as becoming conscious not to do those things from today.

Chapter 11

Freedom and Empowerment

Independence is Freedom

Think about school. There's so much name calling there that sometimes, to survive, you needed to emotionally be detached from what others say about you, at least for a while. Now, think about the 'real world'. Doesn't the same apply? I know we need to be good citizens and etc., but why should we let THEM tell us who is a good citizen? Standing up to outside pressure and doing our own thing is just like standing up to peer pressure at school, I think. Ever believed differently to what our politicians, our religious leaders etc. tell us to believe in? I bet you would have. Many of us feel the pressure to change our beliefs and positions, to redefine our lives in accordance with what they say. But if you look at history, contemporary wisdom isn't always wisdom after all, and especially if it interferes with the freedom and empowerment of an individual or a society.

People who successfully bring something new to the table to improve things are often those who are not afraid to believe and act outside of the contemporary mainstream. Although derided by many at the time (especially true if it involves a religious belief), the new wisdom can be just what a society needs.

So don't be afraid to be different.

But doesn't that lead us to be loners? It needn't be - you can still do all the things you like to do, and being involved in mainstream society is a must if you want to change things for more people, actually. The difference is that, we should be mindful to be IN the mainstream world, not OF the mainstream world. We can still do all the things we like to, but we do it in a way that matches our beliefs about things. We can still make friends with people who believe differently, but we make sure we are not swayed by them. I sometimes consume popular culture that is sexist, racist or homophobic, but the fact that I am very aware of my position makes me much less susceptible to its dark side, and the

fact that I am popular culture aware means that I share a world with many more people, and can inject my ideas and beliefs of freedom and empowerment into more lives.

Who Said?

20,000 plastic surgeons from around the world have concluded that the perfect woman has the lips and eyes of Angelina Jolie, the nose of Nicole Kidman, breasts like Pamela Anderson's, Jennifer Lopez's bottom and the legsof either Tina Turner, Sharon Stone or Cameron Diaz.

Who said, really? Isn't beauty in the eyes of the beholder, and isn't that why the world is a wonderful place? I certainly, for one, don't believe what described above is the perfect woman, far from it.

Part 3

The Self Made Star Lifestyle

Chapter 12

About Self Made Stars

Self Made Stars are one category of people that I admire, that I wish to be among. Self Made Stars may not have the spotlight, red carpet invites and the like. However, they are not afraid to be of their own style and do things their own way.

We are here to tell stories of self made stars around the world, be they red carpeters or everyday people.

Most importantly, as described above, self made stars can be red carpet stars, or they can be everyday people. One of our more important aims is to gather ideas to help everyday people get the voice to become a more effective self made star. This is being made more and more possible by modern communication technology such as the internet, but we also need to actively dream of the dream that everyone can

be a self made star before it can come true. On the other hand, red carpet stars have too much attention and their lives are too controlled by the popular opinion and commercial viability out there. This is one problem we are interested in looking into too.

Chapter 13

So Why Should You be a Self Made Star

First of all, let's make some things clear. To live a life where you cannot dream of better is quite sad indeed. However, in today's cynical world, more and more of us find ourselves in that predicament. This book is about ending all that. Why are people so discontented now? Why do some people do destructive things enjoyably? One major reason is because they lack ways to put their mental energy to use.

Being a self made star is about living the life of your dreams without needing others to give you permission to. It is about putting your mental energy to better things.

However, we need to first be stars. You see, stars, like the ones you see in Hollywood, have a bigger tendency to dream than your average neighbour. You may say it's the money, which I would say is partially true. However, we don't

need to money to feel the spirit of being a star - all you need are thoughts that will free you from the cynicism that is surrounding us. They also have a better tendency to put into great causes and feel optimistic about the world. You may say it is the publicity they get - but who needs publicity to do that? It is all about the mindset, I believe.

Being a self made star is about the mindset.

Another thing - no more negativity. We should also create opportunities for ourselves to use our mental energy better. For example, instead of thinking about how it is a 'not so good earth', we could appreciate the good side to life and how we can improve the world. Instead of just trying to be destructive or critical in fashion and musical styles, maybe we can find a way of personal expressions ourselves.

Chapter 14

The Mindset of the Self Made Star

This is the Basic Mindset of a Self Made Star -
Things that Every Self Made Star believe in.

It's not hard to try out what you want to do

So many of my friends have once hopefully told me what they really wanted to do, yet retreated only a few minutes later, realizing that they wouldn't have a chance. Actually, it is this mentality. Not the reality itself that kills the dream. Since the first step is probably to keep the dream alive, a much better thing will be to continue dreaming big and start doing things in that area, no matter if it seems small. After a while, the path out often starts to emerge. So start today!

Just try!

Ever dreamt of doing something and then thinking that you are too small to do it? What if you could really do it - wouldn't you have missed out? Don't let the vastness of this world overwhelm you, don't let anything they say or how the world seems stop you from trying to do what you want! Think about this: If nobody tried, who would have made our lives better?

For Aspirers

As a person, wanting a voice so you can get your ideas going really shouldn't be too much of an ask. We should actually pull together and strive for it, and return the 'voice' to us (as opposed to a few red carpeters who happened to be liked by some organisation and hyped).

Young achievement, Old achievement - both can be stars

In this day and age there is often this dilemma - the young have all the fashion and the old have all the expertise. The young either are Silent or will not Contribute and the old are complaining of aging. Actually, we should operate on different Schemes for each group that can supplement each other. The young can have their fashion and their art, and give Contribution in areas like fresh ideas and creativity and the old can have their fashion, art and culture and Contribute on their experience and expertise. The two should be valued just as much and the young and the old should communicate more while still having their own worlds.

New Inroads

This is true for roads leading to any place: as old roads become congested, worn and hard to use, new roads have to be built. And they will always be built. There are three lessons behind this: 1. Look for the new roads- they are much better to use, 2. If you happen to be stranded somewhere, perhaps you could be the one to build the new inroads?, 3. If you happen to be the builder please make it accessible, not too hard to use, make it last by ensuring that the former two conditions last, but accommodate for any new roads that will inevitably arise.

Chapter 15

Things that Self Made Stars Do

Do Your Thing

Don't be afraid to do your thing, even if it is not the conventional thing. Remember, without dreams and innovations we would be stuck in the forest still today! So whatever it is, (as long as it is not immoral), you should find an appropriate and helpful way to build your dreams. What's more is that on the way you will also find some very interesting things....

Build Your Own Future!

We young people should help to build our own world's future - after all if there are no environmentally aware people among us - what will we live in 30 years? If nobody would care about the disadvantaged, will they get better on their own? These are just a few examples, in fact there are many place which you may be interested in and that they need your help! What about it's our future. Think about it: if there are no good cultural icons in us out there, where will culture be in 15 years? Or if there are no technology innovators would there be progress? So whatever area you're interested in, apply yourself now.

Creating the Magic

Even as a star, the magic that they create for you out there is not consistent or reliable. There are times that come and you don't expect it. And there are also times that have gone and you miss so much. Many people I've met recently have been stuck in the latter situation. Symptom 1 is: They usually yell 'Wow, I'm bored'. Symptom 2 is a deteriorating efficiency at work. and Symptom 3 is deteriorating health, especially mentally. However, helplessness seems to be the common underlying theme here. 'People often complain that they can't help themselves.'

Ask yourself, what you would do in this situation? Sit there and do nothing? Let them get you? Let the growing shadow of darkness gradually engulf you? Or walk actively towards the source of the light? I would choose the latter, because it means I don't have to be engulfed. For example, I would like to be hosting a real radio show.

If there are not enough parties around I will throw my own. If there is nothing to do I will create something for me and my friends to have fun with. If there is nothing special happening that day then it is time for me to do something about it. Starting by small things like having your friends sign an entry in your diary would be good.

Raise Your Voice

Afraid that you'll be drowned out in the sea of opinions? Feeling not big enough to make a difference anymore? Try raising your voice! Use whatever way you can to be yourself and talk about all you want to. When you are feeling that you are doing your own thing, you will find a way. For example, out there, 'independent artists' of all media churn out good stuff almost every day, from obscure little websites big material is added everyday, and the audience is getting to them too. So start now - you can!

Strength

We know that there is unfairness out there in the world. We know that people are being hurt every day. Yet we are often too afraid to take a stance for it. But our guilty conscience knows that if we don't do so, people will continue to hurt.

To make matters worse, to help people in itself is often controversial, the controversy is brought on by the fact that some people don't want the world to change, and has used justification to make necessary change look bad. You know their sense of right and wrong is misinformed, by looking to the examples in history, and by looking to how good usually prevails in the end. You know that, from history, if you delay your actions and take more discussions with these people, it will be many lives wasted in the years in between. Yet it is easier just to debate than to act in ways which will upset some people. Yet your moral conscience is right. To uphold universal love and compassion is the highest goal, and to defer standing up for what we need

to do is to defer our responsibilities. We need to be strong. And in the end, the reward of seeing people getting the treatment they deserve is more than worth all the hard work.

So Little to So Much

Often so many little things turn out to be so big in this world - think of all those little useful quotes we gather from everywhere. Someone's little advice may clear up a friend's day, some little creative conversation can cause a whole new culture etc. And it goes on and on, from one group to another, in some cases it may reach people or cultures you don't even know of where it is transformed into something useful for them. So it's not how little it is - just that this inspiration exist is enough. So don't be afraid to do your thing, and thank those who have done theirs to make your day.

Often what is your culture, what is 'huge' and popular, or what can cheer you up again comes from that little innovation, the little idea to do something. So when you think about culture, you should extend the possibilities that you can think of. And be creative - you too are a participant of culture - don't let anything stop you. Notice how those wonderful things around you, a lot of that must have come from small

innovation.

Also, you should try to pull your diverse experiences from everywhere together. Try to mix a cocktail of positive experiences into a new positive experience. The marriage of multiple ideas lead to new ideas, and the mixture of colors give rise to new colors etc.

Mixing, matching, and providing your own positive creative energy will provide you and those around you with a brand new experience.

Follow Your Heart

People say the phrase 'follow your heart' more and more these days but actually people follow their hearts less and less. In the advent of advice being so plentiful and mistakes being so expensive, people consult more and think less. However, this is problematic. One can only think for oneself. Others' choices are often unsuitable and may even lead to unhappiness or potential not fully achieved. Therefore, when you are required to make a choice yourself, do it yourself!

Improve the World - It's in Your Hands.

I believe that, if we work together, everything from general living conditions to global poverty can be improved, and we can work towards the ideal of everyone having a voice and a great life. For example we can all work to improve everyone's access to a great life, and improve productivity for everyone, so that they can do more and still have more space.

If you have an idea, start to build things around it in the ways that you can - post it somewhere to let people know, tell people, even start projects. Don't wait for someone else to do it - they won't do your lot - and you shouldn't really complain just for that!

The Friendly Ideal

We should all strive to make friends with each other, and support each other. We should extend what good things we have out, and we should do this by good exchange in an atmosphere of togetherness. Of course this means putting down historical barriers and embracing a vision in which we can all be together.

If I want to do/create something, I do not want it to become a weapon for one group against another. Therefore I run by the idea where everybody can come together to enjoy a good life, the benefits of what each other have got and can share, peacefully and in understanding true meaning.

Chapter 16

My Philosophy for the Self Made Star

Do You Need to Change your Personality / Style?

Ah, this is probably the most public and acceptable of all the myths out there today. There are whole books written on it, even a whole industry based on it. Apparently some personalities are bad and successful and effective people don't have them. As a result, if we want to be successful, we need to change our personalities to be like those who are successful. But you can only say this if you ignore the vast range of personalities among the people who are successful in today's world. Bill Gates is widely known to not be the easiest to get along with, while Oprah Winfrey is much more supportive. There are obsessive people and relaxed people, creative people and robotic people, romantic people and practical people, who have all found success.

The key is not to change your personality, but to build on it, and avoid its bad side. Those people who succeed in doing this do well in life. They become the passionate, the analytical, the innovative and so on. Those people who don't become every negative type - the violent, the cynical, the unrealistic and so on. The first step is to understand our personality, not reject it, because it is our greatest friend and our greatest foe at the same time. It is our greatest friend because it is one of the biggest tools in our toolbox to help us do what we are destined to, as showcased by the great masters of influence, from Oprah to Mandela to Clinton, who each have different personalities but are equally captivating. It is our greatest foe because if we get on the wrong side of it, it can really ruin our life, as seen in many sad cases in life (unnamed of course, but numerous) who have tried to do something that is really not for them and failed miserably (and hence why they are all unnamed).

Why are so many people in the world afraid of showing, let alone studying their personality? It

is clear that they are afraid that they will not be accepted, because they do not have the 'perfect personality'. Worse, some of the atypical ones, those that are probably most destined for greatness due to their uniqueness, are afraid that to be different is to be a 'freak'. But this is an illusion! And, this should be clear when you have a look at the people that have succeeded in gaining popularity, setting trends, selling well or making a mark in the scheme of things. All of them are 'different'! Many of those who have made the greatest contributions are exactly those who were bullied at school because they were different, not those 'perfect' types you find in management books. Sadly, other 'different' people have instead gone and wasted their lives on withdrawing from life or even becoming a real pest to society (much to the delight of those who want to prove the 'perfect personality' theories), because they just can't see this.

But clearly, the choice is up to you. The world needs every personality, just not any one of them in their bad or toxic forms. If everybody

were about the same, and nobody bothered to create their own 'brand', the world would be standing still and there will be virtually no big progresses in all areas of life. So, my advice is, cherish your 'difference' and use it well!

Self discovery and expression

Oh, this is one of my favorite topics! To be a real star and act like one, to be at ease with your style and package and promote the best in it, you really have to know what you've got. Think about the little pieces of your life - Think about both yourself and the other parties - Think about what you were actually thinking when you said something. Was something troubling you?

Think about what you actually want out of life. Think of all the possibilities. And then, have a way to improve things. Have a way to allow yourself to be rid of all those troubles. Have a way of getting yourself out to do the things you really want to.

Here's a way: Try to envision the possibilities, what's holding you back, and how to breakthrough.

Being Real vs Compromise

Some people stress on being real, so much that unnecessary strife is created.

Some people just cannot stand up and voice their opinions.

Both are dangerous.

If you can be, in principle, true to yourself, at least in most occasions, you will find that 1)you are comfortable and 2)your wishes are fulfilled more and 3)you may even be helping to improve things in the longer run.

But if you must stress every detail rather than the main principles, you may go mad and fight and destroy unnecessarily just for this.

However, those that just get pushed around will also find themselves having done nothing they wanted and having everything compromised at the end of the day. Having a society like this is like having a pool of unmoving, dirt-collecting water.

Hype? Explore for real!

To get to know something for yourself, listening to rumours abound is definitely not enough. In fact, you have to clean out your prejudices and get to know things for what they are. Only by this way can you really get something positive out of your experience. Cultures and subcultures alike around the world have misunderstood each other for a very long time. If this historical prejudice is not cleaned out from your mind, you will never appreciate the true beauty of things - you will only be adding to the current prejudice. And if you do successfully reach out, you will find that it was worth all the effort!

What is Respect

People have gone too far in disrespecting these days. For example, talking rumors about the uninvolved family of a certain person is very disrespectful, as well as making up stuff about someone that you assume, e.g. by stereotyping.

Say What You Can!

You may think what you are thinking or what you know is not important but think again. There are many out there who may benefit from hearing you talk. So don't shy away from sharing your goodies. Also, if we are all going to have equal benefit the wider context of society, the only way to ensure this is to have the concerned people stand up for themselves. So every bit of effort is important.

Populism, what to do?

The popular cry is often useful. From the abolition of slavery, the women and civil rights movements, to the fair workplace and anti-war movements, they all have a big component of the popular cry. Thus the popular cry is often essential for giving a voice to the usually unheard and has an important role in bringing justice.

But in other times the irrationality and fear of crowds can do things that utterly destroy what we have (e.g. excessive fear can destroy liberty). So giving into popular cries completely propel us to nowhere. Principles like liberty, justice, peace and harmony, integrity etc. must be kept, or the consequences will be horrific.

So hear the popular voice as one big voice that has things to be resolved. Everyone should take their concerns in and design solutions that accommodate these concerns. In turn, groups with concerns and ideas can also communicate them to the 'electorate'. But, no matter what solution is decided on, it should have been OK (although may not be preferred) for every good

citizen possible, and preserve the very principles that make the liberal democracy that. Remember that even Hitler was popularly elected.

Trends

Trends come and go, and when they come they become dominant. Many also have a lasting impact on culture.

There is nothing so wrong with new trends even if the older generation hate it. Trends are the background for many other social activities in the period that they are dominant, and if you realize what is really going on behind the trends you will usually see that most are quite healthy or at least not really harmful. Trends are just tidal waves in the greater scheme of gradual cultural change.

The most worrying thing about trends is that trends may become so dominant that it occludes the chance for alternatives to be successful. This is one of the reasons we should guard against group thought. If everybody only support the same things other valuable things will have little support and a lot may be lost. Therefore, we should expand our horizons beyond the current trends. We should try to

support valuable things (be it books, music, culture....) even when they do not seem to be too loved by the people around us, or when they have gone out of fashion. We should not alienate ourselves from things simply because they do not fit into the current trend. We should try to appreciate them first.

Media and Image - the Story Behind

The media is often blamed when it comes to young girls' anorexia etc. My opinion on this:

1) The media in fact has a lot of responsibility for its thin standard bombardment and its tolerance of taunting;

2) However it also shows that we always hold one standard only when judging a lot of 'comparable' attributes, like beauty, although the standards may change with time. If people just recognized that different people ought to have different standards, would the media have so much power in this? (Let this principle apply to all applicable places, not just beauty!)

If you have the opportunity, you should start the campaign to an awareness of this, and maybe contribute to the alternative standards that can dissolve the threat of the mainstream standard to people!

Stars Should be Sane in the face of Groupthought

In any institution run by votes, dangerous groupthought must be avoided. It is the start of bitter, useless and sometimes evil factionalism, ending in a situation where further good can't be achieved and evil is harboured. A groupthought group running a society relying on votes from the its citizens is on the way to no good, since any evil idea could snatch the whole situation easily by infiltrating into groupthought. Groupthought is the end of the pursuit of wisdom and the worth of individuals. Avoid it at all costs.

Therefore, look further than what's in front of you. Try to know a little more about the world around you each day. For example, go to a news source you don't usually go to or search on the net for alternative answers. Keep an eye out for all sorts of philosophies and some of the latest scientific theories and developments. And yet, keep your mind clear and your intuition good - only a clean mind can appreciate things well.

That's the way to know a little more.

Many people like to call themselves individualists. However, when cultural police patrol the boundaries of acceptable influence in all walks of life, groupthought and tribalism operates and hijacks individualism and use it as a weapon for their sometimes evil ends. True individualism involves individuals looking at this wide world freely and forming their views freely. Any compromise is a threat to all wisdom and all visions for good communities: as I've explained in previous situations, tribalism undermines the principle of individuals making choices. So if you live life under the mantle of individualism, make sure that you are not hijacked by groupthought.

Chapter 17

Self Made Stars - Go Make Yourself Useful NOW!

An Army Gone to Waste

Studies have shown that as of recently, more teenagers than not want to become a famous icon of some sort. While some just dream of the big money that often comes with it, a lot of these people want to do something for culture, just like how other children want to do something for the sciences, arts, or sports. Most of them are part of the optimistic generation, and therefore are not really deterred by the big odds against them in this area. These are big odds here, however. We all know that in the current system probably only 1 in 1,000,000 people get to do ANYTHING at all for the culture, and that is an optimistic estimate. The conservative estimate, taking into account the fact that many cultural institutions are in fact controlled from the top, and you don't get freedom with your public persona until you earn

it, makes this even more steep.

So how about the 99.9999%? In our experience, they survive, get jobs and live peacefully, it seems. But they never do get their chance at contributing to culture. Which is sad. Our society and markets are supposed to satisfy wants and needs, but this very big one certainly is not satisfied in any way. If we work hard and earn enough, we can live in mansions and go on round the world tours, if we want a certain qualification we can study hard for it at university. But it seems that there is no way to become a significant contributor to culture for most people.

This all is a result of the failure of the current 'system' to bring more talent in for cultural creation. There are no fair exams or tryouts to get there, nor are there education programs you can join - too often it is determined by social connections. The only solution to this problem is to help open up the system so that the focus of cultural creation gets shifted gradually from the very elitist one we have now to a more

accessible, egalitarian and meritocratic one. And the work can only be done gradually - the current fact is so pervasive that to create an separate, alternative system will not change things much - most people won't bother watching indie TV or listening to indie music unless they connect in some way to their familiar culture. This is why we are trying to change how we interact with popular culture rather than abandoning it, even though it is a bit of disappointment. We should embrace the elitist system's products even if it is the way it is, and only by doing this can we turn things around for real. It will be a long road, but I believe it is possible.

Stand up for Your Beliefs, and be a Role Model for them!

If you don't stand up for your own beliefs, nobody else will. Your beliefs have come to you via life experiences, because you know how people can be suffering if you don't.

And standing up for what you feel about is the best civic duty a good member of society can do. If nobody stood up for civil rights, womens' rights and gay rights, we would still be living as they did in the 1950s and before - falsely believe that we are doing good while we are actually hurting a lot of people, and without anyone to tell us we are wrong. If not for the 'youth movement' at around the same time, young people today would still be beholden to huge amounts of 'traditional authority' and their fresh ideas not allowed to soar.

Besides speaking out, you also have to be a good role model for what you stand up for. You can't stand up for equality and retain traces of racism, for example. If you want to help

everyone to live a good life, you can't just sit there and whinge. Therefore, you are improving who you are in the process too. In fact, you will be living a meaningful and healthy life in more ways, which will contribute to your personal health and success in life, rewards fit for those who would stand up for the good of disadvantaged people and against unfair circumstances.

Believe in Wellbeing for All, and Wellbeing is Your Reward

Something beautiful often comes out of those communities that stick together, and strive for an ideal together. Through the fact that they share a common dream, they also share a more idealistic and less cynical worldview. Through the fact that they share an idealistic world view with each other, they also live this in life and take good care of each other. They do the best in everything, from living their own lives, to taking care of their fellow travellers, to of course the work they have to do to bring about their ideals. Having an optimistic worldview and community support that comes from this also results in wellbeing, the deserved reward for people working hard to bring about a better world in one way or another.

However, some communities work together to what they think is an ideal, but one which is clearly not, one which clearly does wrong to some individuals. The result is that, these communities start out as a project for division,

and because they have this attitude, division and the resultant hatred always pops up in their community, threatening to destroy it at any minute. They have not been communities truly fighting for a good life for all, and therefore they do not deserve the wellbeing as a reward. You see this phenomenon all the time in groups that are racist, intolerant of people from other religions, homophobic, rebellious for the sake of being rebellious, or otherwise hate-based in some way. They often hide this part of the story, but former insiders who have been hurt and leave in regret are always available to tell them.

So become a member of a community (or even multiple communities, for such communities are never exclusive) that is putting it in for something meaningful, and you shall have a good life. Such groups contribute to build the world around us into a loving family that is caring to all, and that spirit will certainly affect your life.

What Politics Cannot Do, Self Made Stars should Try to Do

Politics can do some things, but not everything. We need to pay attention to politics and make our vote count. This is because we don't want a government that only favours one group (e.g. big business or people of particular beliefs). Government is also essential to help 'adjust' the balance of the forces out there when the market forces fail to, so that everyone can have a fair go at things, so that everyone can have the maximum amount of freedom to do what is right by them.

Once upon a time, some people thought a good government was the solution to everything. But can a government, a relatively small bunch of people, solve the problems of a whole nation, sometimes problems that they haven't even heard of before? Probably not. Thus we need a government that makes it possible for people to have the resources to solve the problems, a government that is non-judgmental and treat everyone with equality and respect, but this in

itself will not solve all the problems.

Voting at an election to make sure we get this kind of government is a must for every eligible citizen. But then we must move forward to do the next step. That is, to actively make the communities we associate with get a good deal out of this world, because we know them better than the rest of the world, and we can help make things better within these communities and make the bridges out better too. We also need to help everyone else out there who is disadvantaged too, so they can have basic human dignity, to have the space to do what is right by them, and to have a fair go at life. This is the dream, and if we all work on our part, we will get there.

Why Making Your Voice Heard is Important

We all want to be the most empowered we can living in this world. And yet hate and discrimination are crippling so many of us every day. We all want to be free from misunderstanding and bullying. And yet so many of us are suffering from just these things every day.

Why, after all those years of enlightenment, do we still suffer from these problems? Many say that it is the bad side of human nature that is the cause. But let me offer another explanation: we have not been trying hard enough. We have not been trying hard enough to be our real selves, to tell the world about our stories, to tell the world about who we really are and what we really suffer from, what we can contribute to the world and where we need help from the world.

If everybody told their stories truthfully and everyone else listened, there would be a lot more help, empathy and sympathy around the

world. In turn, that would solve 90% of the problems that we face (yes, a little more empathy would direct a lot more resources into the End Poverty by 2050 campaign, something which I really believe in).

This is not going to be easy to do, but it must start from us. Start telling your story to the world, and in return, listen to others' stories too. Do not shy away from the 'uglier' side of your own story, for it is likely to be where other people like you may be able to get help from. In turn, do not be judgmental against other people's stories. Any dose of hate, discrimination or so-called 'moral panic' is not helpful, nor is political correctness. All we need is to be open to what each other has to say, and be optimistic and work hard in trying to change things for the better.

Standing up for your Causes

Cultural Creators should stand up for the causes that they believe in - lest nobody cares anymore. It is just part of the social responsibility of all citizens to do this.

Most of the 'culture' created by the 'innovators' that we have followed may just be a bit of entertainment. But it is also through a member having a voice that many unheard, disadvantaged and misunderstood minorities are able to speak of their concerns, fears, dreams and aspirations. Without these people speaking up, we won't even have the knowledge to cater to enough people to build a big family or make dreams come true for enough people.

The people who I wish to see have more ways of speaking up with technological advances and the changing world are the 'independent' cultural creators. The non-mainstream cultural innovators, those that can represent these unheard minorities, are often not among the safe, popular acts that commercial machines

would choose to promote, and therefore giving more to the independent voice is the only way we will truly hear more voices.

Do This if you can Do It:

The Importance of 'Amateur' Media Creation

Forget the supposed technological advancements. After all, this decade has been the worst one for the advancement of hardware computer technology (Intel predicted that we would clear 10GHz by 2010, we did clear 1GHz by 2000 and 3GHz by 2001, but we are still yet to clear 4GHz today!)

I believe that 'amateur' media creation is the biggest achievement in the 2000s. Just look at YouTube, Lulu, Blogging services, MySpace and Facebook. They are the most popular websites out there today, and have transformed the leisure, if not working, lives of many individuals. But just what use is this army of citizen writers, reporters, journalists and so on? And why should you join the revolution now?

Most of the 'professional' media we consume today are businesses that involve big money. They are there specifically for that reason - which I cannot really lay blame on, as money =

professional services is how a capitalist society works. However, the fact that they serve to pander to the popular taste means that the content will always underrepresent some opinions, lifestyles and cultures in society. As a result, if mainstream media were the only source of information and entertainment, many groups would feel isolated and lonely. If less diverse voices are heard, then a society will be more prone to ignore its diversity in its culture and policies. It would also be hard for any campaign save for the most commonly agreed on ones to organise, as early advocates will find themselves each a lone voice, ignored by the media and have no ways to share their ideas with a larger population. And as all great movements grow from small movements, a mass media society would come to a standstill gradually.

Some groups have found their own way through it. For example, conservative Christians in America have set up their own parallel cultural network so that their in-crowd can receive information and entertainment that is

constructive to their own culture, and can have a way to organise and galvanise in-crowd opinions for movements. They have only been able to do this because churches are wealthy institutions. However, most other cultural groups cannot really do the same. The fact that this group has had unreasonable influence in recent years is due to the fact that other groups have not been able to do similarly.

The rise of citizen media creators correct this, and somewhat level the playing field again for all groups. Less well funded groups, like people concerned with the environment, refugee rights, global poverty and equal rights for all, have been able to make significant gains in the internet era because of this. Thus it is no coincidence that the Barack Obama 08 campaign in the USA is the most digitalised and also the most progressive in recent years. The rise of citizen culture creation has made this possible.

Appendix

TaraElla's Biography

Chapter A1

Early Days: Reflections on the path I traveled to come to the conclusions I have now.

Let Me Tell You the Story of My Life, up until the age of 21, the time where my view on life and culture formed.

So Why Am I Telling This Story? And what's so important about it anyway? Am I really self-obsessed?

I believe that life is a cultural relay, and that each of us is doing a leg in a history-long cultural relay, one that we eventually will bring us to a better destination than where we have been. We are actually also running more than one relay at a time, because our life stand for more than one thing. This is one of the most important purposes of life for me.

Parents teaching children about the world and about their life stories is essentially a function of

this. I believe this is an important way parents are linked to their children - after all being linked genetically isn't exactly that much unique - we are all very genetically similar anyway, and nowadays we can alter everything physical (well almost). However, children are not the only people who run the next leg for you. Parents who believe in this demand inappropriately on their biological children - they forget that the next leg for many of their own relays may not actually be their own children but somebody uniquely suited to the task outside.

I still don't know who will be running the next leg of all my relays, and probably will never fully know about this. But this series is all about what I have seen in life, and what I want the people who are going to take the next leg of the relay that I am running to know, to gain from what I have learned, and what people on the legs before me have learned.

A note about timeframes

Not all the things listed here happened in exact chronological order. You see, my life

circumstances meant that some things needed to be done well ahead of what my chronological age otherwise suggest. To compensate for that, there were windows where I could re-visit non completed stages and complete them.

Therefore, for example not everything listed in my Teen Years section actually happened in the order that I describe them. But they were culturally similar and related to one other, and therefore I put them next to each other.

The Beginning

I was born on an ordinary afternoon. That's what I was told, anyway.

Childhood was a time of dreams for many kids. It certainly was for me too, however it was not entirely typical. I am remembered by the adults for wanting more than the usual kids' toys, for wanting more than what I was supposed to have fun with, something that I am still known for right now, 20+ years later.

The meeting of places and cultures

Throughout my life I was blessed with many opportunities for travel and cross cultural experiences. I was born into an Asian family but I have lived many of my years in multicultural cities, meaning that my culture is influenced by more than just my parents' culture (and mainly not my parents' culture actually).

Cultures meet each other every day in multicultural cities. These meetings result in both curiosity and conflict in members on both sides of the meeting. It was something that I learnt as natural from a very young age. Although some adults really have had problems with the practices of other cultures, it was the curiosity side that got the better of me. This would be a spirit that I would maintain through life, and inspire my later dream for the whole world to start understanding each other and be friends with each other.

Not that kind of girl

At school you learn that there are those who listen to everything the adults say, and then there are the rebels. Well, I probably wasn't up

to being a rebel and I didn't want people to dislike me, but from an early age I told myself that I would not just take what the adults say or what they think I should do. I had my own ideas and I wanted to try them out.

And soon I learnt that not everybody liked that. Which was fine with me.

What Would 2000 be Like?

The Year 2000 used to be an enigma for those people who lived on the other side of it. When my parents were young, a lot of Y2K talk was just about fantasy, like people would travel in space and robots would rule our lives.

But by the 1990s this curiosity turned into a movement for a better future in many parts of the world, and amongst many interest groups. The common underlying theme for them was to encourage people to imagine and build a better world together.

Therefore, when I was growing up, optimistic and creative people seemed to be found

everywhere. This spirit would guide me through my own life and dreams later on.

I was a Tech Person, then

One of the big booming optimistic and creative fields at the turn of the century was computer technology. And the numbers speak for themselves. Between 1997 and 2000, computer speeds more than tripled.

Being the kind of person that I am, always looking for the latest hottest developments that can change our world, of course I couldn't miss out on this arena. During the last few years of the last century, I was an avid reader of computer magazines and websites, for both hardware and software (I seemed to have periods when I switched between one and another predominantly).

It wasn't just technology that you learn by observing this scene. You took in the atmosphere of something great being about to happen every two weeks or so. You made friends talking about this, and together we

looked forward to great news, which was in abundant supply because the great minds churning out this technology were competing against each other at every moment. This is why I have come to expect the same with progress in solutions for equality for disadvantaged groups, for example.

Chapter A2

The Teen Years: The 2000 Optimism and its Impact on me

The feel good that came with the 2000 'revolution' (supposedly one should have happened with all the efforts they put into it, but I have the sense that it is still being put on hold, maybe to happen in 2020?) was a great inspiration to my life. It released my creativity in thinking about how we can make things better. There was a feeling that we would soon no longer need to be tied to our current circumstances anymore. The dream that One Day We Will All Be Friends really looked like it had a chance to come true. Although many people lost that faith after 9/11 and the like, this is still the goal that I am working to, and the spirit embodied in Y2K optimism still guides my life every day.

The nerds, the dreamers and the rebels: I was at their intersection.

Teenagers place a large emphasis on their identity, and in particular where they fit in relation to the map of subcultures and cliques. They are known to use all sorts of symbols, from clothing to music, to mark their territory. So where was I on the cultural map as a teenager? I was all over the place, probably. Initially the technological emphasis may have put me into the nerdish basket. However, as I touched on before, by the year 2000 I was heavily into dreaming of a better future. Thereafter, my interest in technology was mainly driven by my desire to bring about a better world. In fact, a few years later I became quite against the technical-for-technical-sake 'ideology', preferring instead solutions that could change lives.

And then there's the most important question you will want to know about every teen: Were you rebellious as a teen? At times, I guess. Since I was very young, I had always believed that I could find a better way of doing things, so I wasn't always a happy camper. However, I didn't like the focusing on the negative side of things

at all. I still don't now. Nor did I want to be destructive. Therefore I did not lead that rebel lifestyle that many teens craved. Instead, I modeled my life somewhat on those cultural princesses who had positive visions for the world, based on love and dreams. Therefore, I probably wasn't a rebel by definition.

Where has All That Led Me to?

As a teenager, I was a misfit, needless to say. But then I was actually not unpopular. I did not belong to any clique, nor did I wish to. But I got along well enough with most of them. Therefore, in fact, I was one of the more well known students in my year in High School. I held my own style, pretty much, and I was known for that. And I was happy that I was known for my style, not mimicking anybody else's, something which I am still proud of doing (or at least trying to do) today.

My lifestyle actually came from my life philosophy. I have always believed in uniqueness. My motto is that, what each of us come to this world to contribute is different,

because the world needs people who are good at different functions to make it a good place. To this day, I am still a strong believer in that.

My non-conformity did not sit well with some who prescribed more to the traditional Asian way. They blamed in on the fact that I was exposed to too much of 'the West' (something that they don't know very much about I think) when I was young, and may have got slightly intoxicated by their ways.

On the Clean Living Vision

In the Late 1990s and Early 2000s there was a re-emphasis on clean living, at least in some circles. Maybe it was just that popular culture needed to cater to younger kids now, or maybe it was the fact that many people were tired of all the negativity of the past few decades. Coming from a background that encouraged that, I identified with the movement mostly.

The 'role models' of clean living were also leaders representing various visions of a healthier world. This new kind of coolness fitted

in with the 2000 model of expecting an almost 'perfect' world post Y2K. When popular culture was all about being outrageous, I had no interest in participating in it. But now that there could be some good that came out of it, I decided to embrace it, and start dreaming of one day being a contributor to it.

N.B. The 'clean living' coalition has fractured today, I think. The conservatives have put their emphasis behind their dogmatism, and then progressives have become bureaucratic. Everyone now enjoys outrageous behaviour once more nowadays - well, except me probably. However, for me, the idea that there needs to be some sober, thinking, vision building people to keep the movement rolling and fight against the erosion of ideals and rights we have won, and fight for more of the ideals to come true, is still the basis of my act.

And then I started to talk...

My newfound love of popular culture helped me connect better with the world around me. I started to make friends by talking about the

events that happened around us. Through this process, I found a new type of connectedness with the world that tech talk just couldn't deliver. My desire to build something better for the culture thus intensified over time.

The beginnings of my writings

From my contact with the culture out there, I decided they really need something better. They needed something that would actually help people feel better and live better. I wanted to create a new kind culture that didn't fit into any existing niche (just like how I have always lived my life), but instead define its own niche based on the aforementioned values.

I decided to start by creating a character, my ideal model of a celebrity who would encompass this culture and its values. Thus was the beginnings of my writings, circa 2003.

The Beginnings of the Compassion Movement

When I started to think more about the world in general and events that have happened closer to me in particular, I found out gradually that

stories have a great ending (or at least a less bitter one) when they have an essential ingredient - compassion. Compassion was the key to reducing suffering in almost every case.

Throughout my early teens I was becoming more and more aware of this, thus abandoning a lot of the 'judgmental' values that were conditioned onto me as a young child. However, the moment that realisation really hit home was when the world was turmoil post 9/11. The realisation, that a lack of compassion causes deaths and chaos, caused me to review everything I did in my life.

Ever since then, this principle of how everything must be done in a compassionate way has affected my thinking and my life in all spheres of life.

The Media Age and Reality Television

Media communications technology was advancing rapidly throughout my teen years - in 1999 the internet was still very primitive, but by 2006 we had YouTube, MySpace, 2GB Emails

and the like, and live streaming of overseas TV shows was to follow soon.

With this development, more and more people were being heard. The fact that so much information was now accessible via the internet meant that people organised more rapidly and intensely around minority interests, propelling them to prime time TV status. With the advent of the Blog everyone became a media outlets, and they were indeed instrumental in politics, especially in the 2004 US Presidential elections.

At the same time we developed a curiosity about what everyday life people (as opposed to red carpenters) have to say. Reality television was a big thing throughout the 2000s. We started to realise how much the everyday person actually has to say, the content of which is often richer and more stimulating than what the average traditional celebrity had to offer. Then we began to realise what impact these new 'everyday stars' can have.

Some people decried the blurring of the line

between celebrity and everyday person. But I actually thought it was a good idea. Why not let everybody be a star?

Chapter A3

Coming Up to Where I Am Now

World Events Stimulate Me

As I grew up, world events began to matter more and more in my life. Part of this was because the world was becoming a volatile place, with more potentially exciting but potentially dangerous things happening every day, which warrant our attention. But this should have happened anyway - paying attention to the affairs of the world should be a healthy part of life for every adult, I believe.

This new important part of my life changed the way I saw and reacted to things. I started to realise that little changes in everyday life can lead to big consequences. Failing to discourage that 'harmless' racist or homophobic remark isn't so harmless after all.

No War!

I was at university at the time of the Iraq War.

There was a big movement on campus, going on simultaneously with the big protests on display on national television every evening. That was my first practical education on people trying to make a difference and make it fun.

Thinking about where the conflict comes from
The anti-war sentiment in 2003 led me into the library at university and onto the internet to read all about the history and arguments behind war and peace. Before I was just focused on getting the current violence out of the way so that we could resume life as we knew it before 'the age of terrorism'. However, I started to think about why we were in the situation we were in at all. Are we doing things right, I started to ask. May be there is a better way. And maybe a world with no war was possible.

That became my biggest wish for the world from that day onwards, something that I still talk and write about passionately today.

Some harder times

Towards my late teens, I went through some

hard times personally. During that time I had to deal with some intense personal issues that were draining my energy and happiness out of me. It was only then that I found out how important support from the people around you can be. I also found out how judgmentalism can really hurt, something that I thought I had already know, but now realise that I knew just theoretically.

Since then I have been campaigning for people in the world to be supportive of those around them, and to do so non-judgmentally. My dream is that one day the world will be one big family built around this idea.

The 'Frontier' Culture

Those hard times, and realising what in my life had allowed me to survive those times, made me value these things more. I will make a metaphor there: mentally when I was dealing with those things, it was like I was lonely and facing an unknown frontier, like how explorers open up new frontiers in new lands. Those explorers needed a culture to help them survive

the harsh conditions, and I needed a culture to help me survive my (mentally) hard conditions. Once the frontiers are broken the culture that supported the early people survive and get celebrated. Likewise, today I celebrate the culture that has pulled me through those times - things like mutual support, optimism, having a voice in life to speak your concerns, being unafraid to be different, and love, love and more unconditional love. And I guess a lot of that does get reflected in my work.

And Where Does my Earlier Life Fit?

A lot of the things that I learnt from my earlier life was useful too. I had wanted to make a difference in this world when I was young, now it is something that I just cannot wait to do. I like the 'lifestyle puritans' much less than I used to now, but I realise how we must stay strong and thoughtful (like they do), if we are going to make a difference. In fact, in many ways these moral judgmentalists are probably on the 'enemy side' (ideologically only, nobody is an actual enemy of mine) and the fact that I know a few things about how they act and think are

quite important - just to counter their concerns about our non-judgmentalism.

But most important of all it was all the great experiences that I have had on my journey to where I am now! To know how good and how important some things are, you must have experienced it, and things like unconditional love, mutual support, encouragement, and the like are just like that. Here's a big thank you to those people who have given me those things in my life so far, and those who are yet to share those treasures with me in the coming years!